

(19)



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(11) Publication number:

0 658 469 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(21) Application number: 94119782.4

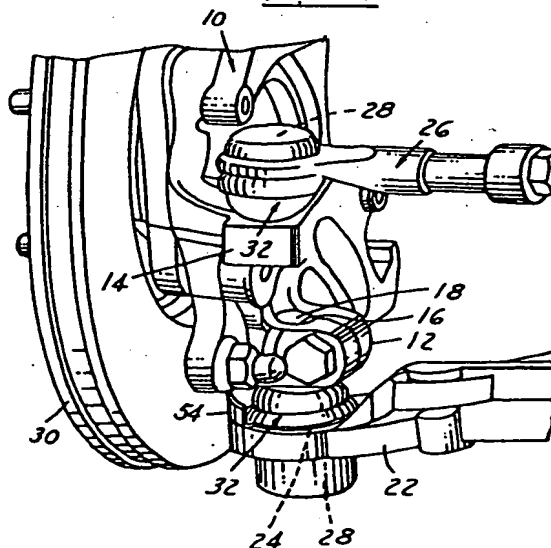
(51) Int. Cl.⁶: **B62D 7/18, B60G 7/00, F16C 11/06**

(22) Date of filing: 14.12.94

(30) Priority: 17.12.93 US 168297

(43) Date of publication of application:
21.06.95 Bulletin 95/25(84) Designated Contracting States:
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D-80331 München (DE)(54) **Ball joint assembly.**

(57) A rubber seal (32) for vehicular ball joint assemblies located in the vicinity of a source of heat (30). The seal (32) includes an integrally molded metal heat shield for facing the source of heat to prevent the deterioration of the seal from the heat. Such a seal with integral heat shield is particularly beneficial between a vehicle brake rotor (30) and lower control arm (22) and/or a tie rod (26) operatively connected to a steering knuckle (10).

FIG. 1**EP 0 658 469 A1**

This invention relates generally to resilient seals for covering vehicular ball joints and, more particularly, to such seals which are subjected to heat from adjacent apparatus which may eventually result in the deterioration of the seal.

Heretofor, resilient seals mounted around particular ball joint assemblies which are in the vicinity of heat-inducing devices, such as a vehicle brake rotor, have been prone to eventually melt through, to thereby open up to deleterious outside effects, such as water and/or dirt, which are capable of destroying the ball joint's function.

A general object of the invention is to provide an improved ball joint seal arrangement including means for shielding same from any heat which may be generated in the immediate vicinity.

Another object of the invention is to provide a ball joint seal with an integral heat shield.

A further object of the invention is to provide a rubber seal for covering a ball joint assembly, wherein the rubber seal includes an integrally molded metal heat shield for protecting the body of the seal from an adjacent heat source.

These and other objects and advantages will become more apparent when reference is made to the following drawings and accompanying description.

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a vehicle's steering knuckle, lower control arm, tie rod, and brake rotor assembly embodying the invention;

Figure 2 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view of a portion of the Figure 1 structure, as viewed from a different direction;

Figure 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of portions of the Figure 1 structure showing various operational positions thereof;

Figure 4 is an enlarged perspective view of a component of the Figure 1 structure which embodies the crux of the invention; and

Figure 5 is a perspective view of an element embodied in the Figure 4 component.

Referring now to the drawings in greater detail, Figure 1 illustrates a vehicle steering knuckle 10 including a ball joint stud boss 12 and a knuckle arm 14, each having an opening 16 formed adjacent the respective distal ends thereof adapted to tightly receive a stud 18 extending from a ball joint assembly 20 (Figure 3). A lower control arm 22 includes a through-bore 24 formed adjacent the distal end thereof for receiving the ball joint assembly 20. The arm 14 has a tapered opening 16 for receiving the stud 18 of a tie rod assembly 26. A suitable seat assembly 28 (Figure 3) associated with each of the tie rod assembly 26 and the through-bore 24 of the lower control arm 22 is adapted to receive the ball joint assembly 20. A brake rotor 30 is positioned adjacent the steering knuckle 10.

A molded rubber ball joint housing seal with integral heat shield assembly 32 is mounted intermediate each arm 12 and 14 distal end and the respective lower control arm 22 and tie rod assembly 26. The assembly 32 comprises, between large and small diameter open ends 34 and 36, respectively, a hollow body 38 having a first cylindrical portion 40 continuing as a partial spherical portion 42, and terminating with an internal flange 44 encompassing a metal washer. An annular concentric recess 46 is formed between the internal flange 44 and a flared-out rubber flange 48.

An external flange 50 is formed around the large diameter open end 34. An arcuate lateral extension 52 is formed on approximately one third of the peripheral edge of the flange 50. An arcuate longitudinal extension 54 is formed on the outer edge of the lateral extension 52, serving as a heat shield adjacent the brake rotor 30.

Molded within the external flange 50, the arcuate lateral extension 52 and the arcuate longitudinal extension 54 is a steel insert 56. As shown in Figure 5, the steel insert 56 includes a washer 58 having a plurality of say, twelve, half circle equally spaced cut-outs 60 formed in the inner peripheral edge formed therein. A co-planar outwardly extending arcuate segment 62 is formed on approximately one-third of outer periphery of the washer 58. A longitudinally extending arcuate segment 64 is formed on the outer peripheral edge of the segment 62, the elements 62 and 64 being molded within the elements 52 and 54. A further short longitudinally extending arcuate segment 66 is formed on the outer peripheral edge of the washer 58 extending for substantially the remaining two-thirds of the washer, with a narrow space 68 between each pair of adjacent ends of the respective arcuate segments 64 and 66.

It is apparent that, as an integrally molded unit, the rubber covered arcuate segment 64 serves as an efficient heat shield between the brake rotor 30 and the rubber housing seal, with the assembly 32 being reinforced by the washer 58 and the outer arcuate segment 66 within the external flange 50.

While but one embodiment of the invention has been shown and described, other modifications are possible within the scope of the following claims.

Claims

1. For use on a ball joint assembly adjacent a source of heat, a ball joint seal device including a rubber housing adapted to mount on said ball joint assembly, the improvement comprising an arcuate-shaped steel flange integrally molded on a portion of a peripheral edge of said rubber housing adjacent said source of heat.

2. The improvement described in claim 1, wherein said ball joint assembly is between a steering knuckle boss and a lower control arm, and said source of heat is a brake rotor.

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3. The improvement described in claim 1, wherein said ball joint is between a steering knuckle arm and a tie rod, and said source of heat is a brake rotor.

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4. For covering each of a first ball joint assembly between a first arm element of a vehicle steering knuckle and an end portion of a lower control arm, and a second ball joint assembly between a second arm element of said steering knuckle and an end portion of a tie rod, both ball joint assemblies being positioned adjacent a brake rotor, a pair of ball joint seal devices each comprising a rubber housing adapted to mount around a respective one of said first and second ball joint assemblies, and an arcuate-shaped steel flange integrally molded on a portion of a peripheral edge of said rubber housing adjacent said brake rotor.

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5. A ball joint assembly located adjacent a source of heat and comprising a ball joint pivotally mounted in an opening formed in a surrounding first movable member, a stud extending from said ball joint and secured in an opening in a second movable member, and a seal device having a partial spherical rubber body having oppositely disposed open ends mounted around said stud and at least a portion of said ball joint intermediate said first and second movable members, and a concentric steel flange integrally molded on a peripheral edge of said rubber body adjacent said source of heat.

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6. The ball joint assembly described in claim 5, wherein said first movable member is a ball joint stud boss of a steering knuckle.

7. The ball joint assembly described in claim 5, wherein said second movable member is a lower control arm.

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8. The ball joint assembly described in claim 5, wherein said first movable member is a knuckle arm of a steering knuckle.

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9. The ball joint assembly described in claim 5, wherein said second movable member is a tie rod.

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10. The ball joint assembly described in claim 5, wherein said source of heat is a brake rotor.

FIG.1

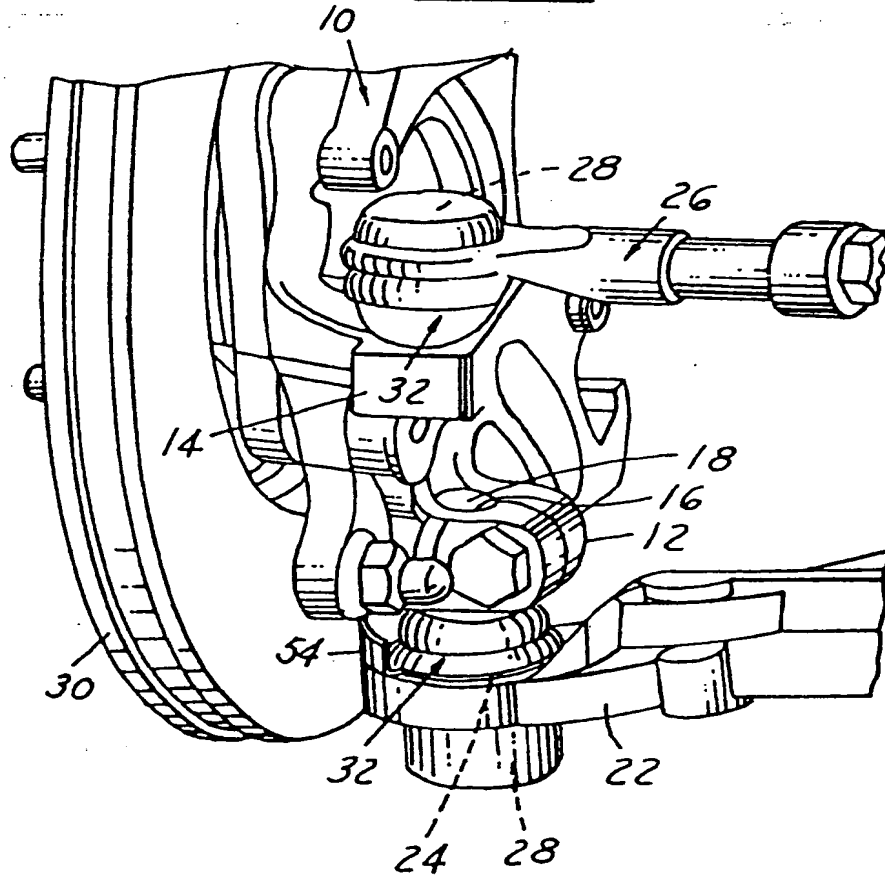


FIG.5

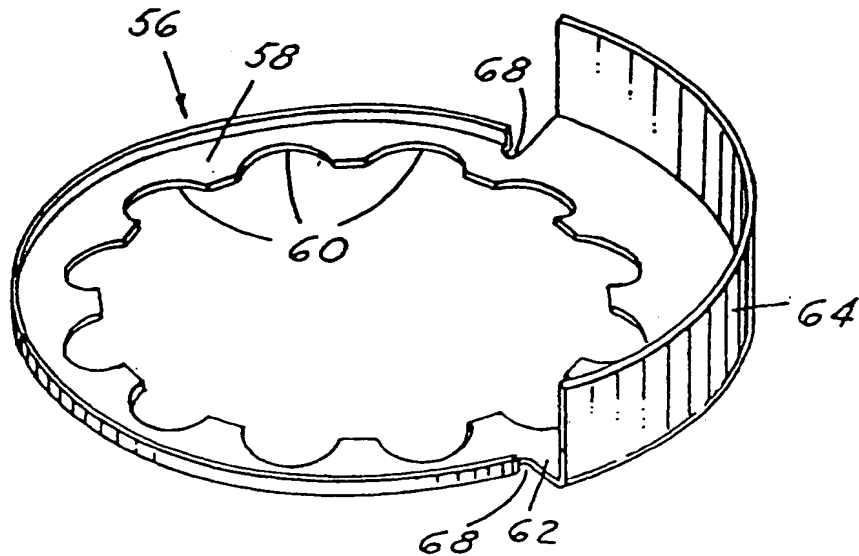


FIG.2

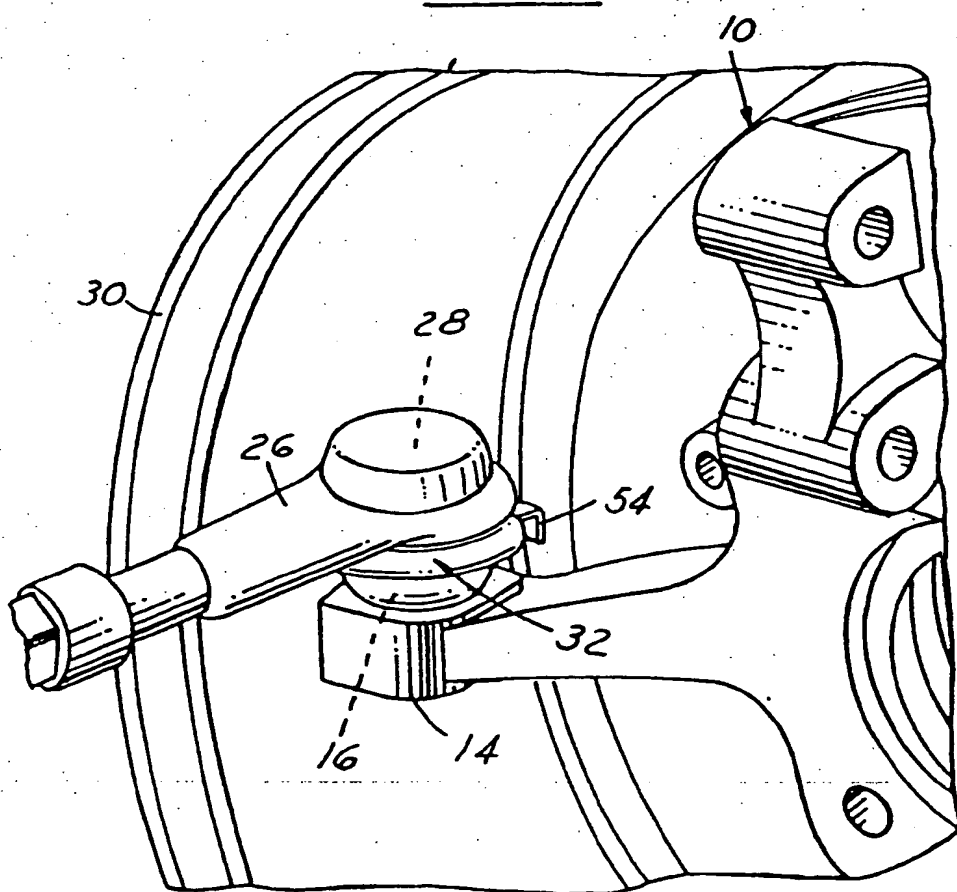


FIG. 3

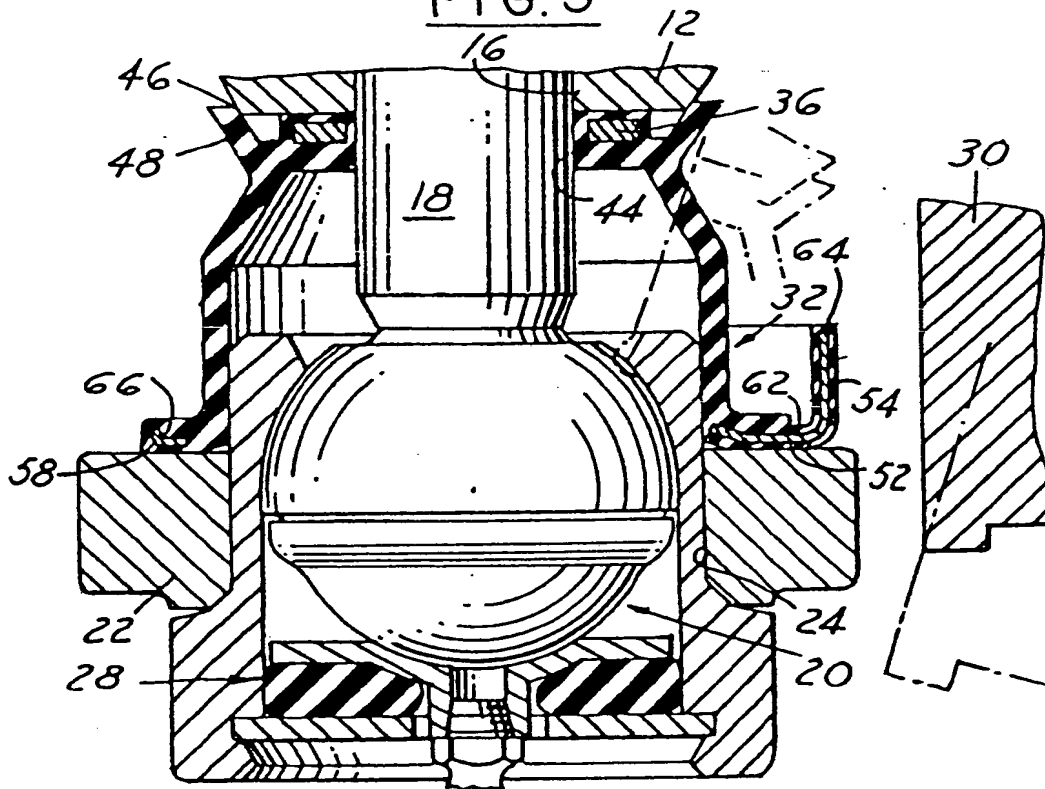
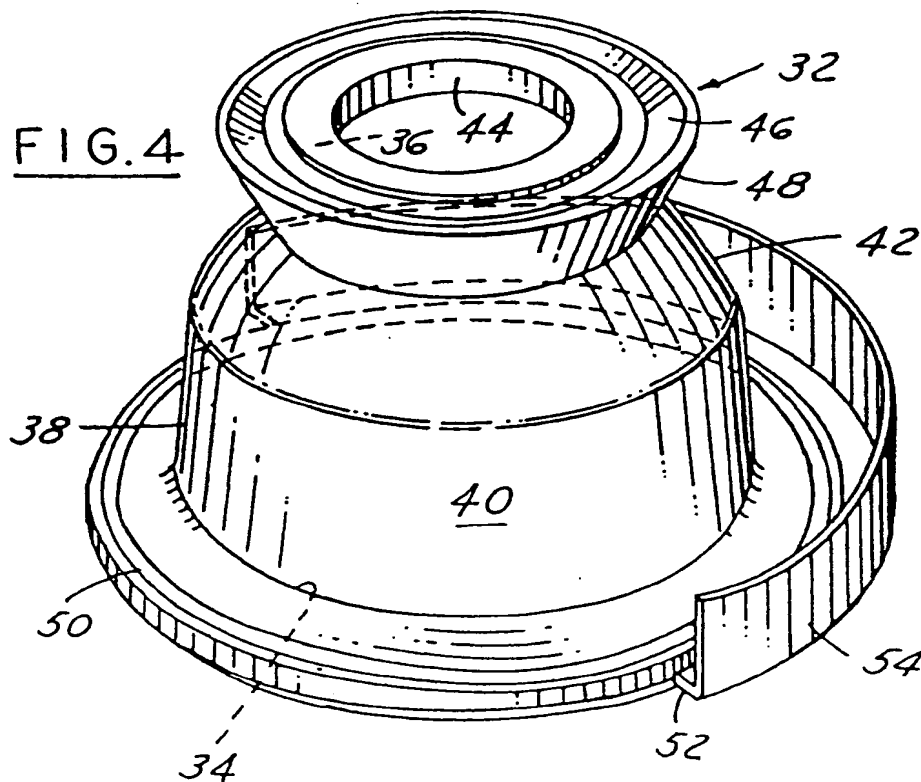


FIG. 4





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 94 11 9782

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL.6)
A	EP-A-0 459 644 (TRW INC) 4 December 1991 * column 3, line 8 - line 14; figure 1 * * column 6, line 20 - column 8, line 3; figures 5-7 *	1-9	B62D7/18 B60G7/00 F16C11/06
A	EP-A-0 570 736 (LEMFOERDER METALLWAREN AG) 24 November 1993 * column 1, line 11 - line 16 * * column 1, line 51 - line 53 * * column 2, line 18 - line 58 * * figures *	1-10	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. CL.6)
			B62D B60G F16C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 March 1995	Examiner Kulozik, E
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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